

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 144706

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM WARSAW JUNE 17:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 4303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT OVIP US PL (ROSTENKOWSKI, DAN)

SUBJ: US-POLISH RELATIONS: ANALYSIS OF GIEREK'S JUNE 13 REMARKS
TO CONGRESSMAN ROSTENKOWSKI

REF: (A) WARSAW 4300; (B) BROWN-SZCZEPANSKI MEMCON OF MARCH 28
AND DAVIES-SZCZEPANSKI MEMCON OF APRIL 14; (C) WARSAW 3959;
(D) 1976 WARSAW 4657; (E) WARSAW 2974

1. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN ROSTENKOWSKI ASKED FOR MY ANALYSIS OF
GIEREK'S JUNE 13 REMARKS. I INTERPRET THEM AS ADDING UP TO A
VEILED PLEA FOR U.S. UNDERSTANDING OF HIS POSITION AND FOR LESS
INTENSIVE TREATMENT BY RFE OF POLITICAL DISSIDENCE AND OPPOSITION
IN POLAND. END SUMMARY.

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2. BACKGROUND: FOLLOWING OUR MEETING WITH FIRST SECRETARY
GIEREK, CONGRESSMAN ROSTENKOWSKI SAID TO ME THAT, UNDER ALL THE
CIRCUMSTANCES AND PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF POLAND'S GEOGRAPHICAL
SITUATION, HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE ACCESSION TO
POWER IN POLAND OF A BETTER LEADERSHIP FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW
THAN THAT OF GIEREK. I AGREED WITH HIM. HE ASKED ME HOW I

INTERPRETED WHAT GIEREK HAD SAID TO HIM. I SAID THAT, IN THE CONTEXT OF MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN POLAND, I INTERPRETED IT AS A PLEA FOR HELP WHICH WAS COUCHED IN VEILED LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY THAT OTHERS IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP -- NOT TO MENTION THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP -- WOULD INTERPRET IT AS A CONFESSION OF WEAKNESS IN THE FACE OF "CAPITALISTS", UNWORTHY OF A COMMUNIST. THE CONGRESSMAN ASKED THAT I SEND HIM A COPY OF MY REPORT ON THE CONVERSATION, TOGETHER WITH MY INTERPRETATION OF IT, SO THAT HE WOULD HAVE THESE BEFORE HIM WHEN HE PREPARED THE PRESENTATION TO THE PRESIDENT ON HIS MISSION TO THE POZNAN FAIR AND TO POLAND, WHICH HE PLANNED TO MAKE WHEN HE SAW THE PRESIDENT ON JUNE 21. END BACKGROUND.

3. THE ENTIRE SCENARIO, INCLUDING THE CURTAIN-RAISER TO WHICH WE WERE TREATED BY JERZY OLSZEWSKI AND THE POSTLUDE BY WISNIEWSKI, WAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED WITH SEVERAL MAJOR FACTORS IN MIND. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THERE ARE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP. AS BEST WE CAN JUDGE, THE "POLISH GROUP OF FOUR," AS IT IS CALLED HERE IN AN ANALOGY WITH THE CHINESE HARDLINERS HEADED BY MAO TSE-TUNG'S WIDOW, HAS BEEN COUNSELLING THE EMPLOYMENT OF A HARDER LINE AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS OF THE WORKERS DEFENSE COMMITTEE (WDC), WHILE A GROUP OF MODERATES, INCLUDING POLITBIURO MEMBER JOZEF TEJCHMA, FRELEK, ANDRZEJ WERBLAN, AND MINISTER OF CULTS KAKOL, HAS BEEN RESISTING THIS (REF B). SECONDLY, IT APPEARS THAT, AT THE MARCH 2-3 SOFIA MEETING OF SECRETARIES OF COMMUNIST PARTIES CONCERNED WITH IDEOLOGY AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PROPAGANDA, THE SOVIETS BEGAN TO PUT THE PRESSURE ON THE POLES TO TAKE A HARDER LINE WITH MEMBERS OF THE WDC, CONSONANT WITH THAT WHICH THEY THEMSELVES WERE APPLYING TO MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET DISSIDENT MOVEMENT. I JUDGE THAT THAT PRESSURE HAS SINCE BEEN MAINTAINED, BUT HAS BEEN RESISTED BY GIEREK, WHO RECOGNIZES THE EXTREME DANGER IN THE PRESENT DELICATE SITUATION IN POLAND OF CREATING MARTYRS OR OTHERWISE PROVIDING A RALLYING POINT AROUND WHICH THE VARIOUS FORMS OF OPPOSITION IN POLAND -- AND, FIRST AND FOREMOST, POTENTIAL OPPOSITION AMONG THE INDUSTIRL WORKERS -- MIGHT COALESCE (REF C).

4. GIEREK'S REFERENCE TO "A CAUTION ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF CERTAIN KINDS OF APPROACHES TOWARDS POLAND" (PARAGRAPH 11, REF A), WHICH HE SAID I COULD EXPLAIN TO YOU, HARKS BACK TO OUR CONVERSATION IN THE SEJM LAST JULY 4, WHEN HE TOLD ME THAT "POLAND HAD ENEMIES WHO WISHED TO KEEP HER WEAK AND DEPRIVE HER OF THE ABILITY TO MAKE HER VOICE COUNT IN EUROPE." HE HAD COMPLAINED THEN THAT "RFE STUPIDLY PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE ENEMIES" (REF D). AT THE TIME, I COMMENTED ON THE IMPLICATION CONVEYED BY GIEREK'S REMARKS THAT, IF HE FAILED AND WERE REPLACED BY SOMEBODY ELSE -- PRESUMABLY SOMEBODY HANDPICKED BY THE SOVIETS -- THE U.S. WOULD BE PARTICALLY TO BLAME BECAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE

EFFECT OF RFE'S BROADCASTING.

5. AS I TOLD YOU, I CONSIDER RFE TO BE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR OVERALL POLICY TOWARDS POLAND. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A QUESTION IN MY MIND WHETHER THE NET EFFECT OF ITS BROADCASTS AT THIS TIME ABOUT DISSIDENCE IN POLAND IS NOT ERODING GIEREK'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN THE KIND OF MODERATE APPROACH HE IS FOLLOWING (REF C). WHAT HAPPENS IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASE OF THE KRAKOW STUDENT, STANISLAW PYJAS, AND THE WDC'S EFFORT TO PUBLICIZE IT. BEGINNING WITH THE DEATH OF PYJAS, THE WDC BEGAN TO PROVIDE WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS IN WARSAW WITH STORIES IMPLYING THAT THE DEATH HAD RESULTED FROM A BEATING PYJAS HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE POLISH SECURITY POLICE. WHEN ELEVEN MEMBERS OF THE WDC WERE THEN ARRESTED, THE WESTERN PRESS WAS GIVEN EVEN MORE MATERIAL ON CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH TO BASE STORIES ABOUT POLITICAL UNREST IN POLAND. AS THE NEW WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR SAID TO ME, THE SPATE OF STORIES THAT APPEARED IN THE WEST GERMAN PRESS MADE IT APPEAR THAT POLAND WAS ON THE EVE OF AN EXPLOSION (REF C).

6. WHEN RFE BROADCASTS THESE STORIES BACK INTO POLAND, THE IMPRESSION IS INEVITABLY CREATED AMONG MEMBERS OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP THAT, AT A MINIMUM, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DOES NOT OBJECT TO WHAT THEY CAN ONLY REGARD AS AN EFFORT TO UNDERCUT GIEREK'S AUTHORITY. THE HARDLINERS IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP (AND, PRESUMABLY, IN MOSCOW, AS WELL) ARE THEN STRENGTHENED WHEN THEY DEMAND TOUGH ACTION AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS. WHAT IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS, THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF SUCH BROADCASTING CAN BE TO MAGNIFY THE ACTUAL STRENGTH OF THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IN PARTICULAR OR OF THE CHARACTER OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE POLISH REGIME IN GENERAL. UNLESS CARE IS EXERCISED, THE IMPRESSION THAT IS CREATED COULD LEAD SOME POLES ERRONEOUSLY TO CONCLUDE THAT A POPULAR RISING MIGHT SUCCEED. THAT IS WHY I SUGGESTED SOME TIME AGO THAT PRE-BROADCAST REVIEW -- AT LEAST OF RFE COMMENTARIES -- HAD BECOME NECESSARY (REF E).

7. I WOULD ADD THAT WE ARE IN NO POSITION HERE TO JUDGE WHETHER RFE'S CURRENT BROADCASTING IS STILL SUCH AS TO WARRANT THE APPLICATION OF PRE-BROADCAST REVIEW. WITH OUR LIMITED PERSONNEL, WE ARE UNABLE TO DO MORE THAN SPOT-CHECK RFE BROADCASTS AS THEY ARE AIRED. ONLY SOME FOUR TO SIX WEEKS AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN BROADCAST CAN WE POST-AUDIT THEM, ON THE BASIS OF THE SCRIPTS THAT ARE SENT US.

8. THAT IS HOW I INTERPRET GIEREK'S REMARKS AND HOW I REACT TO WHAT I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO SAY. IT CONTINUES TO BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO SEE AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP ANYONE WHO COULD STEP INTO GIEREK'S SHOES, GAIN THE RELATIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPTANCE HE HAS WITH MOST POLES (INCLUDING, INCIDENTALLY, CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI, WHO IS REPORTED RECENTLY TO HAVE SAID THAT, WHILE GIEREK IS A COMMUNIST, HE IS ALSO A PATRIOT), AND CONDUCT A POLICY WHICH GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITIES WE NOW HAVE IN POLAND.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: A. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO USE THIS MESSAGE AND THE REFERENCED MATERIAL AS THE BASIS FOR AN ORAL BRIEFING FOR THE CONGRESSMAN. ALTERNATIVELY, THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PREPARE A SANITIZED VERSION FOR THE CONGRESSMAN TO READ.

B. CONGRESSMAN ROSTENKOWSKI ASKED THAT A COPY OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO GIEREK (STATE 135696) BE MADE AVAILABLE TO HIM. (I ASSUME THE SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL BE POUCHED TO ME FOR FORWARDING TO GIEREK). DAVIES UNQUOTE VANCE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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